United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Southwestern Region Forest Health Arizona Zone Office | 2500 S. Pine Knoll Drive Flagstaff, AZ 86001-6381 FAX (928) 556-2130 Voice (928) 556-2073

File Code: 3420 **Date:** October 26, 2004
Route To: (2400)

Subject: Proposed FY2005 Williams Follow-up Mistletoe Treatments (williamsrd)

To: District Ranger, Williams Ranger District

This letter serves as an evaluation for the proposed FY 2005 Williams Follow-up Mistletoe Treatment Project submitted by Mark Herron, Silviculturist. Mark and I met and evaluated the sites in Mid-September. Mark submitted a proposal last year to cover the costs associated with completing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis of the project area, and this year funds are being requested to cover costs associated with felling noncommercial dwarf mistletoe infected ponderosa pine trees on 300 acres and girdling overstory infected trees.

All 13 sites proposed for treatment had received commercial and/or noncommercial silvicultural treatments within the past 20 years, and dwarf mistletoe levels were reduced in order to achieve treatment objectives. There is need for followup treatments since some sites have regenerated and/or dwarf mistletoe infection levels have increased. Sites proposed for treatment are in ponderosa pine or pine-oak forest type. These areas were selected based on walkthrough examinations and NEPA outcome, which are summarized in **Table 1** and include the name of the commercial treatment, acres, wildlife habitat designation, wildland-urban interface (WUI) designation, National Fire Plan condition class and fire regime rating, dwarf mistletoe (dm) severity rating, and threat of dm infection to established regeneration.

Table 1. Sites Selected for the Williams Follow-up Mistletoe Treatment Analysis.

Units	Commercial Tmt. Name	Acres	Wildlife Designation	WUI	Condition Class	Fire Regime	Mistletoe Level	Regen. Threat
3	Reneke	46	MSO/restricted	Yes	II or III	I	Low	Moderate to High
16	Round	80	MSO/restricted	No	II or III	I	Moderate	Moderate
22, 23	Moritz	80		Yes	II or III	I	Low to High	Low to High
24, 25, 27	El Paso	94	Some restricted	No	II or III	I	Low to Moderate	Moderate to High
31, 32, 33	Kaufman II	82		Yes	II or III	I	Low to High	Moderate to High
34, 35	McDermit	6		Yes	II or III	I	Low to Moderate	Moderate to High
36	Parks	20		Yes	II or III	I	Moderate to High	High

On many sites, lightly to moderately infected trees were retained as a seed source during the last commercial entry in order to regenerate the site. These infected overstory trees are now threatening the newly established regeneration. In other areas, thinning had taken place in pole stands and the sites are ready for additional thinning. Monitoring and follow-up treatments were part of the District's original silvicultural plan for these areas.

The proposed treatment is to fell or kill most dwarf mistletoe infected trees in the project units. Most dwarf mistletoe infected trees <18"dbh will be felled and activity slash lopped and scattered. Unit 22 will have all infected trees <15"dbh felled. In areas where slash concentrations are high, machine or hand piling with follow-up pile burning will be done in order to decrease fire risk. In Units 23 and 24 non-infected trees <7"dbh will also be thinned to improve stand health and growth.

Recommendations

The District is commended for their monitoring protocol, in which they have surveyed 2,700 acres of sites that had previous commercial and noncommercial treatments. They were able to determine 1,214 acres need analysis for follow-up treatments, although due to consultation and surveys for Mexican spotted owl over 600 acres have been dropped for this project to proceed. An investment was made when many sites were treated to reduce the impacts of dwarf mistletoe infection, funding the proposed treatment is the next logical step in order to take advantage of an effective treatment opportunity.

Because of the ips bark beetle outbreak on the District, we recommend the following slash treatment guidelines be used in this project:

1. Generate slash between late summer and the end of December, if possible.
2. If creating slash piles, place them in stand openings as much as possible and place the largest diameter slash on the outside of the pile to promote quick drying. Tepee style slash piles with branches and small-diameter slash in the middle and the larger diameter material on the outside.

If large-diameter slash will be given away as free use firewood, inform the public not to pile the green slash next to trees in their yard. Preferably, the firewood should be bucked into short lengths (i.e., less than 14 inches), peeled, split, and placed in direct sunlight.

If you have any questions regarding this evaluation, please let us know. We can be reached at (928) 556-2075 (mfairweather@fs.fed.us, Mary Lou) or (928) 556-2073 (janhold@fs.fed.us, John Anhold).

/s/ Mary Lou Fairweather
MARY LOU FAIRWEATHER
Forest Pathologist, Forest Health,
Arizona Zone

cc: John Anhold, Debra Allen-Reid, Mark W Herron, James A Hall